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1 September 1977

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MEMORANDUM FOR:  Acting Director  
Center for Policy Support

SUBJECT : National Intelligence Tasking Center at Langley

*We believe that any 24-hour or crisis-oriented component of the National Intelligence Tasking Center (NITC) should be co-located with the DCI's Operations Center here in Headquarters. The NITC's raison d'etre is the coordinated tasking of all collection assets in furtherance of the production of national intelligence. To fulfill this purpose, it must have available an efficient organization for the timely reorientation of collection assets in response to a crisis.*

#### THE NITC-NFAC INTERRELATIONSHIP

NITC's chief correspondent will be the National Foreign Assessments Center (NFAC). NFAC's charter designates it as the Community's (i.e., the DCI's) sole producer of national intelligence. Its product will be the Director's chief means of discharging his responsibilities to the President and the NSC Staff and its production analysts his principal source of independent, non-departmental judgment. We believe that there are real payoffs to be had from locating the NITC in the same building as the NFAC, with its National Intelligence Officers and the production offices--for many of the same reasons that these resources must be immediately accessible to the DCI.

While proximity alone would not guarantee that NITC's collection officers and their supporting staffs are fully informed of the substantive issues and concerns that should drive their tasking efforts, it will avoid the additional impediment to cross communication entailed by physical separation.

The Requirements, Collection, and Production loop is generally understood as a continuing process--but one with a finite end. It is the analyst engaged in basic research or seeking to respond to a request for "hard information" from a National Security Council staff member who perceives a gap in his data, frames a requirement, shares in the planning of a collection strategy that leads to the tasking of one or more systems, refines or redefines his needs as new data are obtained and then incorporates the information he has derived into the analytical product. In only one step of the process--the planning of a collection strategy and the tasking of various collection systems--does the analyst depend upon systems operators or others who are not substantively informed. Briefly put, the analyst is the essential ingredient of the tasking process and the measure of NITC's effectiveness. Otherwise whom does NITC support? What analytical insight can it bring? How can it weigh the

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relative merit of competing collection requirements?

Secure voice communications, ADP-conferencing techniques, and the like help bridge the gap between remotely located organizations, but they are vulnerable to degradation and software problems. Moreover, they are under operational control of agencies not subject to the DCI's line control, e.g., NSA, and hence subject to over-ride or conflict with departmental requirements.

#### CRISIS TASKING

Most of NITC's work will not be time-sensitive. But when there are requirements to collect against perceived foreign crises--

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time is of the utmost importance.

Ad hoc tasking changes the equation. The merits of co-locating NITC with an operations center are clear. Implicit in "quick turnaround," interactive tasking is the notion of support to NITC by a 24-hour intelligence center--either its own or an existing community center. It would seem more logical and more expeditious to co-locate the NITC tasking group with an existing center.

We believe that a NITC co-located with the CIA Operations Center has a better potential to serve the DCI and the Community for these reasons:

- line control by the DCI
- proximity to the NIOs
- co-location with the Community's analytical base
- cost effectiveness, i.e., probable savings in manpower and communications costs
- utilization of an existing and experienced operational base

#### ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS

No one seems to be suggesting that either the State Department's Operations Center or the National Military Command Center host such an element--and rightly so, since both are departmental operating centers in the narrow sense and benefit from the most straitened intelligence inputs.

The National Military Intelligence Center has been established to manage the Department of Defense collection assets and sits astride a flow of information to the community that is derived from departmental and tactical collection efforts under the direct control of the Unified and Specified Commands. In practice, the NMIC has little exposure to non-military collection problems and does not control other than DAO assets. It would appear that an interactive, 24-hour tasking group subsumed into the NMIC

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25X1A

would be most difficult to bring under the control of the DCI and would probably not be responsive to our principal substantive officers, the National Intelligence Officers.

NSA's National SIGINT Operations Center (NSOC) is no more promising. By statute, and operationally, NSA is a collector--not a producer of intelligence. Its NSOC was set up to provide 24-hour SIGINT processing and analysis and to manage SIGINT collection assets. It has no in-house or remote corporate experience with other than SIGINT collection programs. Moreover, NSA/NSOC is a DOD proprietary, not proximate to the DCI or his staff, and therefore it, too, is not likely to be brought under his control.

#### THE LANGLEY ADVANTAGE

We are an all-source center, experienced in supporting the DCI as his role has evolved. Thanks to the Management Committee's decision to meld the old Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Group and the Office of SIGINT Operations Center with us, we already have most of the technical means to task SIGINT collectors in synchronization with the tasking we already do [redacted] via our fully manned Imagery Watch.

Slightly more than four years ago the Agency took cognizance of the fact that a network of intelligence and operations centers had burgeoned over 20 years without an overall rationale having been applied to their development. Neither were the lines of authority and responsibility stemming from the National Security Council structure reflected in these centers. We concluded that [redacted] national level sensor systems and developments in secure voice communication dictated a major change that should reflect the DCI's authority over the Community and his role as the President's chief intelligence officer. Of particular importance we felt, was the need to accommodate to the DCI's responsibility for crisis management and to bring the community's structure into line with the authority delegated him by the President's reorganization of 1971. We argued that any redefinition of the DCI's role should be accompanied by the establishment of a National Intelligence Operations Center. That Center, with representation from State, NSA and DIA, would be in a position to review all incoming information with the purpose of providing national, current and warning intelligence to the President, the NSC, the heads of departments and agencies involved in national security affairs and their staffs.

What we sought was a solution to the problem of uncontrolled, overlapping and sometimes contradictory information supplied to NSC-level customers. Our purpose was lent further importance by the realization that technical collection-analysis-dissemination systems designed to provide tactical warning were outdistancing the ability of the community's analysts to provide strategic warning. National level military commanders had defined strategic warning so narrowly and so closely in parallel with tactical warning that the Intelligence Community and the DCI would be operating at a distinct disadvantage unless there were some redefinition of national and departmental responsibilities. We were convinced that effective strategic warning could be derived only from analysis of all relevant information.

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For reasons that are amply recorded, the Agency's leadership was not then in a position to do what we advised.

As a result, we set out to establish an all-Agency center, as a prelude to a more ambitious undertaking--bringing together the Directorates of Intelligence, Operations and Science and Technology to support the DCI and his principal deputies in a near real-time environment. This required a rethinking of roles within the center, a change in the administrative subordination of the Center within the Agency, and a radical tightening of employment and performance criteria. It also led to the acquisition between 1973-1975 of additional floor space and communications channels and, in 1977, additional stand-by space to accommodate a national-level task force or the type of working group that might be convened by the DCI under the authority given him by the NSC in the closing days of the Ford Administration.

#### POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

Having accomplished all of this, we are now ready to go national--accommodating officers from State, DIA, NSA and NRO--and whatever fast reaction interactive tasking component that may become a part of the NITC.

The Imagery Watch recommends itself as a model for NITC. Operating on a 24-hour schedule, the Imagery Watch works closely with analysts from the production offices who seek mechanical "know how" for tasking [REDACTED] satellites. The Watch is able to translate the analysts' needs into definable requirements and use the COMIREX Automated Mangement System (CAMS) to levy time-dominated requirements into the target sets

[REDACTED] And the Watch is able to expedite preliminary readouts from the site back to the production office analysts. This permits rapid dissemination of the findings of these modern collection systems.

The protection of source and methods, i.e., reasonable compartmentation, will be essential to NITC for it is likely to find HUMINT no less essential, albeit less responsive in the matter of time, than some of the technical sensors. Our physical arrangements are such that we can guarantee the DDO such compartmentation--and could do so even in the presence of a contingent of officers from other Agencies.

#### STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

In a national operations center, we would hope for officers skilled foremost in the production of national intelligence. Such people should be senior enough to vote their principals' stock in any brokering or re-ordering of collection priorities and to pledge the cooperation of their parent organizations. For an NITC component, the staffing requirements seem to us to be qualitatively different.

There, we would need the services of systems operators--people skilled in the utilization of SIGINT, Imagery and HUMINT collection systems. A collection of this range of skills does not exist in one place at the present time. These capabilities are dispersed among NSA, SORS and OSOC, the DDO

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and DAOs, the NRO, COMIREX and its subcommittee for collection (ICRS), the JRC and the Unified and Specified Commands, or are buried--though not in ample measure--in various requirements shops throughout the community. The best and brightest people could be seconded to NITC and afforded space adjacent to the CIA Operations Center and Task Force areas, where they could oversee an orderly and rapid transfer of information to the production offices, the NIOs and the DCI--not only for the sake of furthering analysis but for the retasking of collection systems.

DOD's equities in the existing arrangements and the tangible byproduct it derives from operational or theatre-level collection efforts are too great to expect that its management or the separate services or even NSA would agree enthusiastically to such an arrangement unless the military played a central role.

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[Redacted Signature]

Acting Director  
CIA Operations Center

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